

Mr. Julius Genachowski
Chairman
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Dear Mr. Chairman,

At their recent annual meeting, the Midwestern Legislative Conference of the Council of State Governments, consisting of the state legislators of 11 Midwestern states, passed a resolution regarding the proposal by LightSquared to build a network of satellite and terrestrial signal stations to expand access to broadband and cell phone systems.

There are few groups more eager to get greater access to broadband than state legislators. Many of the rural legislators across the Midwest have no access to either cell phones or broadband in their home districts. Those without these services are in the best position to understand the importance to the future of their communities to have access to the services LightSquared is promising. Yet, we also understand what GPS has meant to the farmers and ranchers that populate the region and produce the food, fuel and fiber that keep America fed and reduce our reliance on foreign oil. Farmers use GPS for accurate mapping, reducing fertilizer and chemical use in precision planting and to allow continued work in low visibility conditions. The construction and aviation industries are also reliant on the GPS technology.

The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) mandated report by a technical working group regarding the possibility of LightSquared's network of base stations interference with GPS devices shows potential significant interference between LightSquared operations and GPS receivers both in the upper and lower portions of the band spectrum. While LightSquared says that by moving its program to a lower frequency its signals only affect "high precision" GPS devices and blames the GPS industry for not building devices that can withstand their operation, GPS manufacturers say there are no known filters in production that could retrofit existing GPS units.

The state legislators of the Corn Belt express our strong support for wireless and rural broadband service, but not at the expense of critical GPS devices and GPS based applications essential to America's agricultural and construction industries.

The members of the Midwestern Legislative Conference urge the FCC to ensure that there is no interference with GPS receivers prior to granting LightSquared permission to operate its terrestrial base stations. It is also important that the cost of resolving this issue not be passed along to farmers and ranchers through higher GPS or equipment retrofitting costs.

We do want to thank the FCC for the work they are doing to provide rural America with high-speed broadband services. While the deployment of broadband services is important to the future of our rural communities, the education of our youth and improved health services, the continued accuracy of preexisting GPS applications must take priority over proposals to expand broadband.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these issues of vital importance to the future of agriculture in the Midwest. Please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Senator Carolyn McGinn (KS)



Senator Tim Flakoll (ND)

Co-Chairs, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, Midwestern Legislative Conference